



Guy W. Hempel
Vice President, General Manager

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Chairman Kevin J. Martin
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

Re: Digital Must-Carry (CS Docket No. 98-120)

Dear Mr. Chairman and Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of WHNS TV to express our strong support for the FCC's consideration of requiring cable operators to carry the entirety of each broadcaster's digital program stream, including multicast channels.

Prior to coming to WHNS and Meredith Corporation's WHNS, I worked for The Liberty Corporation. As Vice President of Operations for Liberty, I worked closely with our television stations and local cable operators to secure carriage for our locally produced local weather channels, which we were airing on secondary digital channels.

Negotiating with individual and group operators to secure channel locations was difficult at best. The operators were not interested in providing additional channel space and we had to delay the start of the channels until we could negotiate carriage in conjunction with our primary digital channels. It became very clear that the cable operators were in a position to road block any additional offering that we might create to serve our communities.

At WHNS, we are currently looking for ways to provide additional service to our community either through new types of programming or through special zoned newscasts for our geographically diverse area. We have the ability to explore new models for local television including local public affairs, news, weather, local sports, traffic, community and political programming.

Broadcasting in the digital world is at the stage that analog television was in the early 50's. We have not begun to explore all of the local possibilities. At that point, the industry was attempting to apply a radio model to a new broadcast opportunity. In our current stage of development, broadcasters are attempting to apply analog thinking to a digital medium. We will grow into this new digital medium, just as we grew into a vibrant analog television medium if we are given a chance to experiment with new concepts and ideas.

Cable companies now have veto power over channel placement. If they are allowed to continue to act as gate-keepers, they will discourage exploration of new models and will prevent the television industry from developing its full local potential.

For this and many other reasons, I urge you to exercise your full power under Section 614 and order full digital must-carry without further delay.

Sincerely,

Guy W. Hempel
Vice President, General Manager
WHNS TV